

## I Spy With My Little Eye... by explicit\_slug (big\_slug)

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**Summary:**

Will Byers should have never visited the circus.

## I Spy With My Little Eye...

### Author's Note:

Don't, I repeat, DO NOT read this if you want to retain your sanity. It's terrible from beginning to end and not even REMOTELY hot. If you want to get yourselves off, go look somewhere else, I'm serious.

I don't even know where this shit comes from. Somewhere in the depths of my mind I must be so fucked up, so completely and utterly ruined, that I actually managed to produce this. I hate myself for it, because Will is a precious little thing who deserves so much better.

### November 1983

Will is cold. So terribly cold. He can't remember *not* having to shiver and squirm in this room, in which he has been trapped for... how long? This gloomy, damp room that reeks of urine and decomposition. He's got nothing. Not a single piece of fabric to shield his weak, worn-out body against the crisp air that seems unhealthy, or even infectious.

Is that how he is going to die? Skin riddled with festering blisters, shook by violent coughs caused by these spores, or this dust, or whatever it is that is dancing around in the dim, green light of a single light bulb with colored paper wrapped around it.

Maybe that would be a welcome release. Oh god, is he really already at this point? Does Will really wish to die? No. He can't allow these thoughts without even knowing where he actually is. Isn't this what

he loves the most in school? Analyze new situations, combine evidence to come to a hopefully valuable conclusion? His eyes hurt as if they are about to pop out of his throbbing skull. What can he perceive? Will focuses all the senses he possesses to make a few assumptions.

First, the floor is made of cold, rough metal, textured a bit like the tire of an old-time wagon wheel the pioneers would have used to conquer the old west. Will got to touch one of these on a field trip to an exhibition of some sort in elementary school. It hurts the bare skin of his torso and legs, but Will can't muster the strength to get up.

The walls, or at least the wall Will touches with his back, feels similar, if a bit less worn. Putting a massive amount of strain on his eyes, Will finally manages to make out the contours of the room. Elongated, with no distinctive features visible.

He is alone in here. Alone, naked, cold, miserable, *hurting*. His mom isn't here. She would pick him up, wrap him in a warm embrace, shield him from the terrible world that is only there to hurt him. She would whisper to him, tell him it's okay, tell him he doesn't have to be scared.

Jonathan isn't here. He'd invite him to sleep in his bed. He'd let him cry and listen to what's scaring him, to all the descriptions of Will's most vivid nightmares. He'd put on music, cuddle up with Will under a warm blanket, and say how proud he is of his little brother.

His friends aren't here. They all would fight for him, even if Will is too weak, or too scared to stand up for them. They'd protect him from the cold, from the sickness that surrounds him, that tries to creep into him. They'd risk their lives to get him out of here.

Do any of them even know he is gone? How long has he been here anyways? Will doesn't know. Will doesn't care. He hugs his own knees, crying.

It's so cold. *So cold.*

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*It's so cold. And yet, Mike's cheeks are glowing red, his trademark smile spreading them wide as he dodges the snowball flying directly at him. He then ducks back behind the tree he and Will are hiding behind. „You okay, Will?“*

*„Yeah.“ Will grins. He doesn't mind his numb fingers nestled in his too thin gloves. All that matters is, they're about to lose this battle if they stay hidden here. Dustin and Lucas will try to take them from both sides if they don't relocate. „We gotta get out of here.“ A few more snowballs smash against the tree.*

*„Direction?“ Mike asks, craning his neck.*

*„Straight ahead.“ Will decides. „That way we can use the tree for cover until we find something better.“*

*„Good thinking, Byers.“ Mike smirks. „On the count of three? One... two... three!“*

*Mike has always been the faster one. And also the stronger one. Actually, Will thinks Mike has always been the better one between the two of them in every regard. Smarter than Will, taller than him, headstrong and never afraid to take a blow as long as it means it doesn't hit his friends.*

*So Will just allows his friend to drag him along by the hand. Speeding across the snow-covered woods behind the house near Castle Byers, he suddenly feels as though he's flying. Will squeaks in delight at the feeling of crackling January air against his face. He can almost feel or even hear the snowballs buzzing past him near his ears. Miraculously, he doesn't get hit.*

*But then it happens. Will completely forgot about the slope. Mike did too, as it seems, because suddenly he trips over his own feet, pulling Will along. All he can see is the white of the ground and the dark blue of Mike's parka. They tumble down the slope together, falling on top and underneath one another, and the world turns into a swirl of colors, brights and darks, cold and warm.*

*And just like a wheel of fortune, alternating between these two, it slows down, further, further, until it stops its spinning. The needle stops on DARK and WARM. Because Will comes to a halt lying on top of Mike, with his face buried in his friend's neck. Still giggling, he breathes in the scent of cookies with frosting and cinnamon, of gingerbread.*

*„Will?“ Mike pants, chuckling. His arms snake around Will protectively.*

*„Yeah?“*

*„I think we're done for.“ he notes.*

*Less than two seconds after he has said that, Will can hear Lucas' voice appearing on top of the slope. „I got them! I got them! Attack!“*

*A loud squeal escapes Will when Mike rolls them over to hover on top of him. That way, his friend takes all the snowballs. All while keeping Will warm. Warm and safe.*

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Cold and scared. That's the reality of his situation, because Mike isn't here. Has Will drifted off to sleep? Was it a dream? A fantasy, maybe? A memory brought to life to shield him from fear and misery?

In the end, it doesn't matter. Something creaks. Will opens his weary eyes to the sight of silver and red. A costume. *The Clown*. It's him. Will doesn't know whom he expected. The Clown would have been one of his first guesses, after that more than weird night. Everyone had been enchanted by the performance.

The skillful acrobats flying, spinning out of control forty feet above their heads in their sparkling costumes. Next to Will, Mike had held his breath at some of the oh so thrilling jumps. He had gasped, cheered whenever one of them made it back to safety.

There had been lions jumping rings of fire, jugglers handling knives on unicycles. People who subjected themselves to every danger

imaginable to earn applause.

But Will had only been fixed on the Clown. In his glistening silver attire with red lace, red pom-poms with small golden bells fastened to them for buttons, white gloves, *white makeup*... The Clown with that piercing stare that never seemed to leave Will throughout the entire show. An audience of five hundred people, but that one Clown only made eyes at Will. And so, Will had wanted nothing more to just go home to his mom.

But now the Clown has him. He is here, towering above a small, frightened Will on the cold metal floor of... of what? *A trailer*. That must be it. The circus had rolled into town with dozens of these.

„Wakey-wakey.“ the Clown sing-songs in a cruel, high-pitched baby voice. „Aw! What’s this? A scared little boy?“

Will looks up at him, shivering even more at the diabolical grin, framed by dark red lips. He doesn’t say anything.

The Clown makes a little dance. It fills the silence with soles tapping on metal. „Yes.“ he giggles. „Yessss. A scared little boy. And a pretty one, huh?“ He bows down to show Will more of those terrifying teeth. Will only curls up more, overcome by fear and shame. „I’m Pennywise, the dancing clown.“ he cheerfully proclaims. „And you... you are William.“

Pennywise makes a jump for it, engaging in another round of dancing. He spins, tumbles from one side of the trailer to the other, all while singing „Will! Willy-Willy-Will!“ He ends on a clumsily

executed cartwheel, shouting „My little toy for... aw! No, I'm not gonna tell you that. Spoils the fun.“

Will whimpers. *Toy*, that's what Pennywise calls him. A toy to do what? Play with? Will doesn't see the game or the fun in stripping him, locking him in a dark room made of metal and pain. He hates this! He hates everything about it! How cold it is, how damp, and how this Clown is taunting him! How the Clown suddenly starts kicking him in the ribs.

The searing pain knocks every last bit of wind out of Will. How many kicks does he have to suffer? Ten? Twenty? Even more? He doesn't count, but Will is sure at some point he can feel something cracking inside of his torso. *Breaking*. He can't breathe. He has to breathe. He has to cry out and gasp for air, even if it means nothing but agony.

Dancing. Kicking. Dancing. Kicking. It's more or less the same thing for Pennywise the Clown. It takes such a long time. Minutes. Hours, maybe. Will tries to turn away, roll over, let his back take the kicks. He can't move anymore. His life is pain, nothing but pain, blinding and relentless. *So much pain!*

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*So much pain! And so much blood! Bawling like the little boy he is, Will eyes his cracked open knee. This bike is just too tall for him. He was afraid of it from the beginning, always hating how he has to jump off because his legs are too short to reach the ground as long as he is seated on the worn saddle.*

*But ,If you want a bike, you take this, or you don't take anything', as his*



*father had put it. And there is no arguing with Will's father. Sobs ripple from his stomach up through his raspy throat as he pushes the damn thing down the path to their house. Hoping, praying that his dad isn't home yet. Not because he has scraped his knee. Dad wouldn't care. It's because he's crying. To dad, that's something you have to beat out of a child.*

*But his dad isn't home. He would have come outside at the first sign of Will's sobbing. Instead, it's Jonathan who meets him on the front porch after he has leaned the bike against the house. „Will!“ he gasps. „What happened to you? Let me see that!“*

*But Will doesn't let him see. He stumbles forwards, whimpering at every painful step, until he finally can let himself fall into his brother's comforting embrace. Only then does the crying really start. But Jonathan is strong. Strong enough to carry Will into the house, down the hall and into the bathroom. „I'm gonna take care of that, bud.“ he mumbles softly. „You're gonna be better in no time.“*

*Will nods, believing every word. Jonathan would never lie to him. He knows everything. He knows how to count to a million. He knows how to fry eggs, how to fix the antenna for the TV whenever it doesn't work. So it might hurt now, it might make Will squirm and bawl, but if his brother says it's gonna get better, he just knows it's true.*

*Seated on the edge of the bathtub, Will anxiously watches Jonathan soaking a paper towel in some bad-smelling liquid. It burns when it touches Will's knee, but he keeps still, eager to show Jonathan how brave he can actually be. A bandage, firmly wrapped around his leg, is the last step Jonathan takes towards fixing Will. And then it really doesn't hurt anymore. Just like that, it's all good.*

*Will still allows Jonathan to carry him over to the living room. They*

*watch TV after Jonathan fixes the antenna once again. It's gonna be more than three hours until dad gets home. And the pain is gone.*

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The pain is still there. Worse than ever, because Jonathan isn't here to fix it. He isn't here to tell Will it's going to be okay.

In here, it's just Will and the Clown. The Clown, who has once again resumed his manic dance, singing „Play time, play time, play time.“ He laughs, giggles, lets the little bells on his costume rattle and ring. „Aren't you excited, my little toy? All the fun we're going to have before it's over!“

All while Will forces his eyes shut. There is nothing there he wants to see. It would just scare him more, make him cry even harder. As long as he stays like this, he can at least imagine their faces. Jonathan's. Mom's. Mike's. He wants them back. He wants them here with him. He wants to be wherever they are now.

Are they looking for him? Do they even know he is gone yet? Or has it been only a few hours? Are they all sleeping soundly in their beds, tucked in nice and warm without a care in the world? Will's stomach churns. He's never going to see them again. No matter what they do, no matter if they already know, *Will* knows this; His life will end here.

A new surge of sorrow breaks out of him with more sobs and disgusting snot that is now running from his clogged nostrils. The slightest movement hurts. He yelps at a sharp pain in his cheek when the clown smacks him there. His eyes fly open. They stare into those

of Pennywise. For lack of a better word, Will thinks they look plain evil.

„P-please...“ he whimpers, unsure why. It doesn't change anything.

„You're scared.“ the Clown snickers. „Yessir! Scared to death! Yes you are! Yes you are! Yes you are!“ He comes even closer to Will's face. His formerly jolly voice turns into a deep, animalistic growl. „You should be scared, little one. We got so much time on our hands. So many ways to...“ He does a clumsy jump, shouting „...make you scream.“

It's then that the world seems to end for Will. Warmth spreads from between his legs, forming a stinking puddle underneath his bruised body. He doesn't have the strength to crawl out of it. Pennywise snorts disapprovingly. „So soon?“ he laughs darkly. „We haven't even started yet!“

The Clown suddenly, with a swift motion, reaches down to pinch Will *there*. He cries out loud. So loud, someone just *has to* hear him. How can no one be around to notice what's happening? How can he be so *alone*?

„No!“ Pennywise scolds. „No, no, no! My little toy won't be making a mess before I want it to!“ Will can feel teeth somewhere on his hurting ribcage. With his eyes closed again, he can only wait for it to happen. And when it does, it hurts just *so much*. It feels warm again, but this time it must be blood. It smells disgusting, like metal, and Will finds it dripping from the Clowns distorted mouth once his eyes blink open again.

„Yessss.“ the Clown hisses again, a mocking tone shining through. „Tastes to scared. Such a poor little boy, all alone with big bad Pennywise. But not... not scared enough!“

Something rattles. Metal slides over metal, *metal locks around Will's ankles*. Shrieking weakly in surprise, he finds himself being dragged across the floor. Seconds ago he didn't think he could cry any harder, but his ribs scream at the stretch. His ankles ache, his skin rips.

And then Will is hanging. Upside-down.

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*Upside-down. The room looks different this way. Somewhat eerie. Will can even imagine being able to walk across the ceiling like this. To jump up to let himself dangle from his desk. It's not making him dizzy, though. He read somewhere that staying like this could cause the blood in his body to flow into his head until it simply explodes, but if that's true, he doesn't feel any signs of it yet.*

*His legs are lying comfortably crossed on his bed, with only his head and shoulders hanging down from the bedside. Will has done this more than once. It's such a great position to think. To watch the world from a different perspective, and to imagine how great it would be to walk upside-down. If he could, Will would just try to get to the room with the highest ceiling he can find. Up there, no one could hurt him. He'd just have to find a way to take the people he actually loves with him.*

„Honey?“ *His mom's inverted stature appears in the door. „You've been like this all day. Don't you want to come over to the living room and-“*

*„And what?“ Will snaps. He rarely ever does that. But his mom doesn't look taken aback.*

*„I'm just worried.“ she sighs sadly. Will can't stand to see her that way. He doesn't do anything to stop it though; He wouldn't know what. „You can talk to me.“ Slowly, gently, she comes closer, until she is close enough to sit down in front of the bed with her legs folded in front of her. They come pretty much face like that. It's even a bit funny, but Will can't shut off his gloomy frown.*

*„Can't you just go?“ he says, unwilling to bother her with his problems.*

*„Fine.“ his mom returns. „You don't have to talk if you don't want to. But will you let me try something?“*

*„Whatever.“ Will answers. His mom takes it as an invitation to climb onto the bed next to him. And just like Will she lays down flat, letting her head fall upside-down. And for the first time today, Will giggles.*

*„You know what I do when I'm feeling down?“ his mom asks, smiling fondly.*

*„What?“*

*„I tickle my son.“ And she does, without any further warning, without giving Will a chance to react or shield himself. Her fingers on his stomach*

*cause him to jerk up, curl up, laugh breathlessly for a few seconds, but she relents soon. „See?“*

*„See what?“ Will gasps, out of breath.*

*„That’s all it takes to turn the world right-side-up again.“ She holds him in her arms then, and Will hugs her back, because she’s right. Why was he feeling down again? Why did he think his whole world was turned upside-down?*

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Will desperately wishes his mom was here. She could turn him right-side-up with ease. But she isn’t here, so all that remains for him is this... whatever it is.

Whatever is happening to him.

Whatever is holding his ankles, suspending him from the ceiling.

Whatever is shoved in and out and in and out of his mouth, tearing on his lips with its girth. It’s warm, pokes the back of his throat to make him gag over and over. It smells so bad, it tastes so *disgusting*. He somehow knows what it is. It belongs to the Clown. It’s alive. It twitches in his mouth. Will wants to scream. He feels the utter need to yell out for his mom to come and save him from this, but if he is making any sounds they are drowned out by the Clown’s hysteric laughter.

Time drags on and on, and it just won't stop. No matter how many tears Will sheds. No matter how much wet, sticky snot runs from his nostrils down (up?) into his swollen eyes.

It doesn't even stop when something else begins poking him at a whole new spot. A spot where nothing is supposed to go in. It does go in, though, and it's like Will is being split open, torn into pieces. Yet again, something breaks. The *pain...* the *gagging sensation...* Will can't stand it a second longer. He doesn't know what happens next. It all just turns even darker, even colder...

„Aw, we're going to sleep?“ a voice coos somewhere in the distance.

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Will comes to once again. Nothing has changed. He can still only watch the world turned upside-down. His dry mouth is empty now, with the salty, dirty taste still lingering. What's that running down (up?) his back? Blood. It's blood from where the horrible intrusion happened.

Pennywise is still there with him, sitting on the floor, watching Will curiously. He giggles when he notices Will is awake. „I spy with my little eye... a little boy... a little toy... that's never ever gonna feel even a little bit of joy... again.“ Something clicks. A lighter. It produces an orange glow that would be comfortable in any other place.

Will can't possibly brace for the touch of the flame, but it doesn't

come anyways. It's worse than that. Far, *far* worse. His devilish grin illuminated orange, the Clown shows off a long, thick needle, letting the fire dance along its length once, twice, thrice...

The sight is too much. Too much once again. Will finally finds his voice, and though he knows it won't do him any good, he screams. „Mom! ... Jonathan! ... Mike! Mike, please! Please! Mike!“

They're not going to come for him.

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It happens so often. Over and over again. It's always the same process, every day. Day? Hour? Will can't possibly know. There is no daylight here, just the bulb, the one with the green paper wrapped around it.

But still, it repeats itself. The Clown comes. Kicks. Upside-down. The Clown's... thing. Split open. The needle. The hose.

The hose is always last. The water is freezing, it doesn't make things better. No, simply washing the blood away doesn't help at all. But at least it leaves behind small puddles. Will can crawl. He can lap at the water to make his crackling throat better.

And after the hose, he is left alone again. Cold, hungry, hurting, with only one way to escape the pain. Will can go back to better times, to better places.



He really lives in these places now. It's nice and warm there. Nothing can harm him. These are places where there are no clowns. No people hiding behind jolly makeup and costumes to lure him in and hurt him. Will just wishes he could stay there forever.

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*The TV is producing a soothing glow in the dark basement. Mike laughs when the beeping sound of Frogger finding his untimely death gushes from the TV speaker. Will laughs too, even though he lost. Winning, losing, what does it matter when he can consider himself lucky to be right here, right now? With no one else but Mike.*

*Will would never admit that to anyone else, but he could do without Dustin's and Lucas' company. Never without Mike, though. As if he could read minds, his friend drapes pulls the blanket tighter around them.*

*Will shudders, closing his eyes, as Mike's nimble fingers rake through his hair and across his scalp. Snuggling into Mike's side, he thinks he might just die here without a single regret.*

*„I suck at Frogger.“ Will mumbles.*

*„You did okay.“ Mike says lightly.*

*„You're really good at it.“*

*„Might be. But I can't draw or paint for the life of me. That's your thing.“*

*Will beams to himself proudly. Drawing is his thing. There are only three people in the world from whom he would accept such praise without questions asked.*

*Something is off, though. Not about Mike, the feeling of his warmth, his voice... No, it's not him. It might be the basement. Will's second favorite place in the world aside from home. Since when does Mike have a TV and his Atari down here? Aren't these supposed to be in the living room? And why, why in the world does Will feel tears trickling down his cheeks?*

*Click!*

*The room turns darker when the TV just switches off without any apparent reason. There is still light, faint and weak, but Will can't make out where it's coming from. He's scared. „M-Mike?“*

*„Don't worry.“ his friend sighs. „Not much longer. Okay?“*

*What? What is that supposed to mean?*

*„He's right, bud.“ Jonathan's voice suddenly comes from somewhere in the dark, past the stairs. „Not much longer.“*

*„Not much longer, honey.“ Will’s mom agrees from somewhere else in the room. His head snaps around, desperate to get a glimpse of them. They’re nowhere to be found.*

*And Mike is smiling sadly now. „Sorry I can’t stay with you.“*

*„Mike, w-what are-“*

*„I really want to, y’know. But I can’t.“*

*„We can’t.“ mom and Jonathan both whisper at the same time. Where are they? Why can’t Will see them, he wants to see them! „Not much longer.“ they say in unison.*

*„Not much longer. You’re so brave, Will.“ Mike repeats, not letting go.  
„Not much longer.“*

*A terrible fear, unlike anything Will has ever felt, gets a grip on his heart. He cries. He begs them to stop. He nuzzles his face into Mike’s thick sweater, still with his friend’s fingers scraping across his scalp soothingly. But the three voices don’t stop chanting.*

*„Not much longer.“*

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„No...“ Pennywise sighs sadly. „Not much longer. Well, you know, Willy-boy, everything has to end.“ He says this in the voice of an adult trying to explain a severely serious topic to a little child. „But not tonight.“ In a sudden shift of behavior, the Clown begins snickering again. „Just wanted to see what knowing does to you. Hm, I can't tell. Does it feel good? Or does it scare you more?“

The answer is, it does feel good. Will doesn't know if he can show it anymore. He doesn't know if his bruised face can still convey emotion, but yes, it's a relief. One more time, or two at most. Then it's all going to be over. No more pain. No more swallowing, no more tearing, no more needles. That's good. That's good. Maybe taking the hose will be easier now.

---

Will was right. Two more times, that was all it took. And now it's over. He keeps his eyes shut, this time determined not to open them. So far, he always did when it got too bad. It was what Pennywise wanted. It made him happy when Will looked down (up?) on himself to find more blood, more bruises, more little bumps from his bones in all the wrong places.

Not this time, though. Nothing the Clown could do could force any reaction out of Will now. The door creaks again. Will smiles. He's coming.

*12 years*, he thinks. Well, it's better than nothing, isn't it? Most of it wasn't even bad. Sure, there was his father, who had made it his mission to make Will's life a living hell. Sure, there was Troy, who, with his cronies, had continued that mission in middle school. So what? In the end all of that pales against these few people who were

always there to make it better.

He loved them all, and if he had one wish, one final wish, Will would want a hug from them all. A short one would be enough. Will wouldn't be picky about it. He would want to tell them it's not their fault that they couldn't be there this one time.

His mom always did her best, worked day and night to feed her family, and still found the time to listen, and to give advice.

Jonathan worked too, and he too found the time to help. How many times did he jump between dad and Will? How many times did he invite his little brother to his room at night just because he felt Will *might* have a problem that needs solving? No boy in the history of the world ever had a better brother.

Mike... he was just Mike. There from the beginning of kindergarten, always by his side, day and night. Mike taught him how to ride his bike without ever falling over, something no one else before could manage to do. Mike crawled into his sleeping bag at night when Will didn't want to admit he was scared of thunderstorms. Yeah, that was Mike.

Now, at the end of it, Will can only hope they never find him, because uncertainty is better than learning about all this. They wouldn't survive the truth.

„It's him.“ a gruff voice says. Distant mumbling follows. Then, the voice is back. „No, I'm gonna handle it.“ Then, heavy footsteps approach. Will doesn't stop smiling when he feels himself being

picked up. It doesn't hurt anymore. Actually, he barely feels a thing.

How is the Clown going to do it? With a knife? With his bare hands? Will is more curious than anything else. He figures, he actually won't find out. His numb body wouldn't know the difference between a blade and the touch of fingers.

His closed eyelids flicker with light. Beautiful, pulsing red light. It seems to be everywhere. Just like the voices. Some are talking. Some shouting. They're all so very serious. Maybe that's what death does to people; turn them into very serious, very worried voices who also happen to produce blinking, red light. Will would have wanted this place to be a little more welcoming.

From all the voices, one sticks out again. It's the roughest of them. „Good... that's good... no, I'll tell them. How long do you think it's... yeah I get it. Take care.“

As he is lowered to a supremely comfortable, soft surface, suddenly engulfed in wonderful warmth, Will once again thinks *,12 years. They were good for the most part.'*

**Author's Note:**

Please! Please hate me!